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TELEGRAM from Christopher." said Mrs. Latimer, thrusting her head within the open library door and reading from the yellow slip in her hand. "Snowbound. Will arrive late this vening. Don't sit up.' "

Thoughtful Christopher," murmured Dick Mason from the depths of his

easy chair. "Poor old Chris-what luck!" cried 'Amy, while Alice murmured to her lover, "I am so anxious that you should meet Christopher, Dick."

"Pray, who is Christopher? Tell me, that I, too, may be distraught at his nonarrival," drawled Penfield, surveying the love stricken Dick and his betrothed with some disgust and turning to Amy, who was viewing him with unmistakable relish.

"Christopher Browning is our cousin," she replied, with a wicked look; at her sister. "The dearest fellow! Writes, you know."

"I didn't know," murmured Pendeld apologetically.

"Well, Chris does write for the papers, magazines or anything that will take the stuff." "H-m-m!"

Amy looked at him from mirth brimmed eyes. She was dressing a doll for the cook's little niece, and she tied a pink bow on the flaxen curls and then admired the effect with audible satisfaction.

"Isn't she too sweet? Now I'm going down to the village to leave this at Mrs. Lee's, and you may come, too, Mr. Penfield, for the way is long and the night is stormy.".

Penfield grose with alacrity. Anything was better than sitting before the cheery fire and staring at the photograph of the girl he loved unwisely and trying to summon courage to ask carelessly whom the picture represented. Didn't he know?

When they reached the front door Amy ran back to the library, and he heard the rise and fall of her shrill girlish voice as she expostulated with her sister. - It was evident that she gained her point for when she returned she was smiling and her eyes were as bright as the snow crystals sparkling under the radiance from the

wide open door.

They plunged into the softly falling whiteness, and Penfield bared his head to the cold fresh air and endeavored to thrust aside the burden that lay heavily upon his heart.

"Such an ideal Christmas evel" said Amy. "When I was a little girl"-"Oh, WHEN!" interrupted Jack mockingly.

WHEN I was a little girl," insisted Amy serenely. "I used to believe that something wonderful must happen on Christmas eve. I would watch at the window and look for a messenger to carrive with maryelous news or expect that a long lost uncle would appear and shower gifts upon us. But it never happened. Nothing wonderful ever does happen to me," she added, with a sigh that was muffled in a mist of fly-

ing flakes.
"Time enough for things to happen when you are grown up, child," Jack said gravely, and then, arousing himself from the unpleasant thoughts that, vampire-like, seemed to cling to him, he added: "Come! A race to the corner!" They reached it laughing and breath-

Later, when they had returned and were sitting before the fire, each waiting for the other to make a bedtime start, Jack remarked lazily:

"When do you expect Mr. Browning

to arrive?" Amy giggled, Dick looked amused, and Alice and her mother exchanged

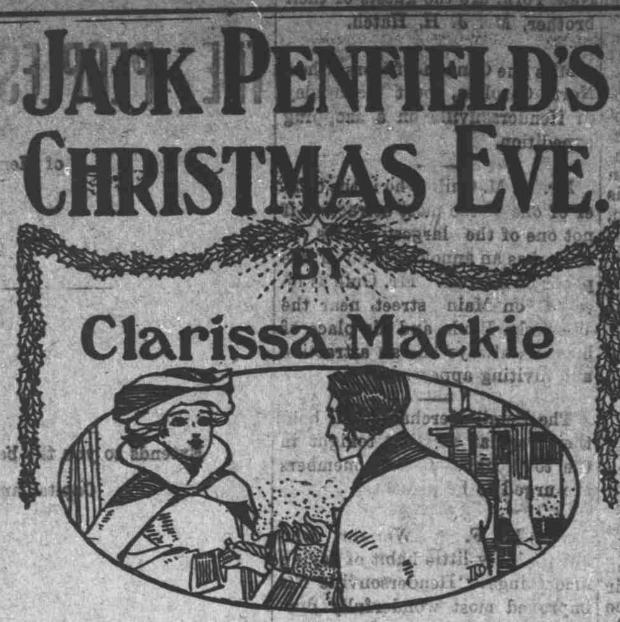
glances of distress. "Oh, any time before midnight, 1 constraint. "We will not sit up the arrival of the train is too uncertain.

One of us will hear the bell and come down." "Icwas about to volunteer to sit up walt for him." said Jack. "I am

in a wakeful mood tonight." THE DIE Penfield," began Mrs.

imer. "I thought it best for him to be there in case the train should arrive earlier than expected."

"It's not a particularly bad night Mrs. Latimer," said Penfield reasour-



ingly. "Miss Amy and I got along west God was everywhere. That was famously. The snow is very light and his famous.

soft, and it is not particularly cold. He had come east because a girl had
Of course down in the valley at San- implanted the germ of restlessness. derson, where the train is stalled; it within him-a restlessness that forhas drifted, and that has caused the bade him peace of mind until he could blockade. Mr. Browning will not mind persuade her to reconsider her dethe adventure unless he is an invalid." cision. The picture before him was an

There was much running to and fro sides relaxation in the eyes of Jack and a great deal of merriment as the Penfield when the day came for herstockings were hung in the wide old to return to her enslaving pen. chimneypiece. Then each one brought "You do not understand," she had gifts carefully wrapped and labeled, sold him. "I could not give up my and with many attempts at secrecy work, and I do not love you as much as they were heaped upon the library ta- I love that. You can see," she had ble. Finally, with warm exchanges added with that frank smile of hers, of Christmas wishes, Mrs. Latimer and "that my love is a divided one, and her daughters withdrew, leaving the you cannot accept that?" two men alone before the fire.

cigar he, too, sought his room, and they had turned their horses' heads

enlargement of one he had taken him-"Oh, Chris is quite robust," replied self with a pocket camera. Its dupli-Alice sweetly. "Now that it is settled cate in miniature was folded in his Mr. Penfield is to remain up to greet letter case next his heart. In the our cousin suppose we hang the stock- spring Kitty Brown had come to the lings and go to bed. We must deposit wast to visit his neighbors, the Clarks. | "I am Christopher Browning," she our gifts on the table here, and mother She was a writer, one who was tired will fill the stockings at some we sma' and whose body and soul needed relaxhour, as usual. When Chris arrives ation. She found it under the free mother and I will come down and give blue sky as she skimmed over the the child something to eat. You must ranges side by side with Jack Pen-keep up a rousing fire, Mr. Penfield." deld, their fleet horses ever in harmony "Depend on me for that," returned with the spirits of the young riders. and it is true she found something be-

"No," he had replied gravely, "I can-When Dick Mason had finished his not accept a divided love." And so then Penfield kept his lonely vigil. It homeward, and their parting had been

was 11 o'clock, and the storm was a warm hand clasp and—that was all. abating. The soft spat of snow against That was all Jack Penfield had to the window panes had ceased and think and dream about. The great



"DID YOU TAKE THAT PICTURE, KITTY?"

there was an occasional tinkle of sleigh- eastern city swallowed her up. He bells from the highway which pro- had not asked for her address, but as claimed that belated Christmas shop the months went by and brilliant anpers were venturing out.

Penfield stared moodily at the pic plain and distant ranges changed color Latimer anxiously, when the party sings around chin was lifted above, the supported her eagedly. The supported her eagedly to the country of the party of the supported her eagedly to the country of the party of the supported her eagedly to the country of the party of the supported her eagedly to the country of the party of the party of the party of the supported her agedly the party of the party of the party of the supported her agedly the party of the par the plains, the free air of Montana, ger, whom he had almost forgotten. where he was king on his own ranch, The hall door closed softly, and then to the overcivilized east, where to the door of the library was pushed simple hearted Jack Penfield God gently open and a slim, dark clad figseemed shut up in the stuffy brick ure, with arms brimming over with and stone churches. In the wild free packages, slipped into the room and

tumn claimed the land, and the broad ture of the girl he loved. It stood on under her hard, cold touch, he grew the mantelahelf, framed in silver, It restless, and finally in December he portrayed a girl in riding dress with arranged his affairs, and, leaving his one arm thrown over the neck of a foreman in charge of the Bar T outhorse, whose nose muzzled her other fit, he had come to New York to find hand. She was a wide eyed, soft fea- Kitty Brown. He had been too proud pered softly. tured girl, with dark hair parted in the and reserved to ask for information intiddle and topped by a broad felt hat. from her friends, the Clarks, and his Not the Christmas Spirit. Latimer anxiously, when Amy inter- Her cound chin was lifted above the quest for the girl he loved had been low it isn't the presents-it's the spirit,"



then paused abruptly as Penfield ad-

"Mr. Browning"- Jack stopped short and stared with unbelieving

eyes. Excel on T. Hope for Co. The girl laughed softly, and there was joy in her eyes as she raised them

asked, dropping her parcels to the table and extending both gloved little

conically, holding her hands firmly in Explain why bood are herasof all ces. I left youlriding the ranges in Montana, and is see you again in the

country home of my cousins, and you call me MR. Browning!" she said, withdrawing her hands and removing the heavy clock that enveloped her.

I was expecting Christopher Brown I was sitting up for him. I was surprised when you entered."

gaid saucily. "Don't dare to tell me that you did not know THAT!" "I didn't know it," he admitted hum-

bly. "I knew you as Kitty Brown"-"Oh, the Clarks always abbreviated it. And so you did not know you were waiting for me?" she said musingly, drawing nearer the fire and holding her hands to the comforting warmth. "I've been waiting for you ever since ou left the ranges, Kitty," he said

She turned away suddenly, and her voice shook slightly as she replied, "I told you that you must not." "I cannot help it, Kitty. You must know"- he began, drawing nearer to

her. "You may help me distribute my gifts," she said quickly, recovering her composure, "and while we are filling the stockings you must tell me how you came to make the mistake in my name and why you, instead of my affectionate cousins, are waiting for me

Jack told his story while the girl dis-tributed the purcels she had brought among the limp stockings. There was even a gift for the capacious sock that represented Dick Mason's Christmas. "I have nothing for yours, Mr. Penfield, sahe said, regretfully surveying the remaining empty sock.

"A little note saying that you had changed your mind"- he began. "But I haven't changed my mind,"

she murmured faintly. "Are you sure?" he insisted. "Your eyes. Kitty, betrayed you when you came into this room. You WERE glad to see me. Say that you will go back to the Bar T with me in the spring." She hesitated. "Oh, there is some thing in the sock," she said evasively, and she stepped forward and, thrusting a hand into the toe, brought forth a small card, which she extended toward Penfield.

He took it and glanced at the opposite side. He uttered an exclamation of surprise. Then he held it out to

She took it reluctantly. As she looked a warm flush spread over her face, and she cried impulsively, "Why, that's miner it mayou in his an

It was a snapshot of the master of the Bar T ranch standing in the corral, surrounded by hundreds of horned

"Did you take that picture, Kitty?" asked Jack eagerly. She nodded shamefacedly.

"How did it get in there?" he asked, with a puzzled look.

A merry voice called from the doorway: "I found it on the floor of your room, Christopher Kit, carefully wrapped in tissue paper, after you went home at Thanksgiving Of course I recognized Mr. Penfield when he arrived yesterday, and—and I wanted something wonderful to happen on Christmas eve, and for the first time in my life it has happened. And that's all, except merry Christmas both!" "Bless the child!" murmured Jack

happily, gathering the abashed Christopher into his arms. "That's what I say, too," she whis-

"Don't waste any time on her. The

and she only wants to find out what it

ring she has on is a Christmas present,

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